

Remarks

Claims 2 through 25 are pending in this application, but claims 2, 3, 4, 6 to 12, and 15 to 24 were withdrawn from consideration because of an earlier election requirement. Claims 5, 13, 14, and 25 were examined and rejected, and claim 25 is generic to all the pending claims. Claim 25 is the only independent claim examined, and claims 5, 13, and 14 depend therefrom. Initially, it is noted that claims 5 and 14 have been amended to correct obvious typographical errors. Claim 5, as amended, includes the word - - extended - - in place of "extend." Claim 14, as amended, inserts the word - - are - - after "sections." No new matter has been added by these amendments.

Independent claim 25 and dependent claims 5, 13, and 14 were also amended as described below.

Objections to Drawings

Initially, the examiner contends that the "pretensioner" comprising at least one protrusion and support sections with a trapezoidal cross-section is not illustrated in the drawings. Item 3 as depicted in Fig. 12 is a trapezoidal support section. This feature is described in the specification at page 12, paragraphs 56 and 57, for example.

Claims 13 and 14 had previously indicated that the support section and link section were the shapes in "cross-section." This latter term was used in error. These support sections are illustrated in Figs. 12 and 13 in "top view" and not in cross-section. Appropriate amendments have been made to claims 13 and 14.

The pretensioner is defined, in part, by item 34 in Fig. 14, which is a contact surface between two adjacent segments that creates the pretensioned arcuate shape of a line guidance unit. These features are described at paragraphs 6, 7, 48, 49, and 59 of the specification, for example. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the objection to the drawings is traversed.

Claim Rejections

The claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, because the examiner contends that the pretensioner was not adequately described in the specification. The pretensioner is described in the above-listed paragraphs of the specification. Nonetheless, claim 25 has been amended to recite that the pretensioner includes a contact surface between adjacent segment overlap regions. The contact surface creates an arc-shape in the line guidance unit. Claim 5 was amended to use terminology consistent with the antecedent basis provided in claim 25. It is respectfully submitted that, given the cited descriptions, drawings and claim amendments, the pretensioner is adequately described.

Claims 13 and 14 have also been amended to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, relating to insufficient antecedent basis. As amended, the claim terms -- support section -- and -- link sections -- are adequately supported in claims 13 and 14, respectively.

The examiner also rejected claims 5, 13, and 25 as being anticipated by *Viano*, U.S. Patent 3,772,875. Claim 14 was rejected as being obvious over *Viano* because the examiner contended that one skilled in the art would have known to modify *Viano* to have a rhomboidal cross-section. The examiner contends that specific shapes would have been obvious choices in view of the particular intended use of the component.

Applicant respectfully notes that *Viano* does not disclose the invention as claimed. Instead, *Viano* discloses a line guidance unit for guiding lines, comprising a plurality of chain links. Each chain link comprises two U-shaped elements. Intermediate elements 22 are provided, which are connected with the chain link. Plates 60, 62 are provided to maintain the chain link and the intermediate element in an assembled position, as shown in Fig. 12. The plates 60, 62 are

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necessary because the chain link and the intermediate element are separate elements on opposite sides of a longitudinal axis of the chain link. The examiner has interpreted the plates 60, 62 as a support strip joining the segments in the meaning of the present invention. (Action, p. 4.) It is noted that these plates are merely transverse elements that do not extend between or join adjacent links and do not provide support in the way that the support strip of the claimed invention.

The detailed description of the present invention explains that the support strip extends in the longitudinal direction of the line guidance unit. Furthermore, the segments are connected with the support strip. These details are explained at page 9, paragraph 43, and Fig. 1, for example.

The amended claims now recite that the support strip is longitudinal and joins the segments. This amendment emphasizes what was already inherent in the original claim. Such a configuration is not anticipated nor would it have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art in view of the disclosure of *Viano*. Thus, amended claim 25 and its dependent claims are not anticipated by *Viano*.

Further, the absence in *Viano* of a longitudinal support strip or any recognition that pretensioning of the line guidance unit is desirable indicates that independent claim 25 and its dependent claims reciting a pretensioner would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.

Claim 25 Is Generic And Allowable

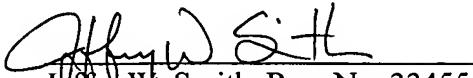
Finally, amended claim 25 is still generic to all of the claims of the application and is also allowable. Applicants respectfully request that the withdrawn claims of the application be allowed as well, as indicated in Applicants' July 27, 2007 election and as provided by 37 C.F.R. §1.141.

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Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, the claims considered by the examiner in the official action, as well as the withdrawn claims, are allowable. Applicants respectfully request that this case be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,


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